



Maine Farm Safety Program

Bulletin #2356

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Logging Safety

Often farmers need to clear woodlots. Accidents can happen if the farmer is not careful. Tractors can overturn while attempting to remove stumps or while dragging logs that get caught on stumps or trees. Trees can fall on people and chain saws can buck and tear into flesh.

◆ Working Safely in the Woods

The following is a guide or checklist for working safely in the woods. Much of it is common sense, and most of the items are simple and easy to do.

1. Carefully plan all activities.
2. Try not to work alone. If you must work alone, notify someone of your plans. Make sure they know where you are, what you are doing and when you plan to return.
3. Carry a first aid kit; if not with or on you, at least in your vehicle.
4. Wear appropriate clothing for the task at hand.

5. In tick country, be knowledgeable about lyme disease and aware of the steps to avoid problems.
6. If you know you have allergic reactions to bee stings, carry a sting treatment kit with you and take it into the woods. Do not leave it behind in your vehicle.
7. Avoid dehydration and heat prostration. Know the symptoms and how to treat them. Always take and drink plenty of water.

Logging Safety

- ◆ **Work with a partner or make sure someone knows where you will be working.**
- ◆ **Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment.**
- ◆ **Modify a farm tractor before using it in a logging operation.**



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8. Stay alert physically and mentally. Take rest and water breaks often.
9. Pack nutritious lunches and snacks.
10. Properly maintain all equipment and keep tools sharp.
11. Acquire and use the proper personal protective equipment for the task at hand.
12. Avoid heavy woods work in inclement weather.
13. Do not drink alcoholic beverages when working in the woods.
14. In the event of an accident, know where the closest possible help is located.

◆ Direction Felling

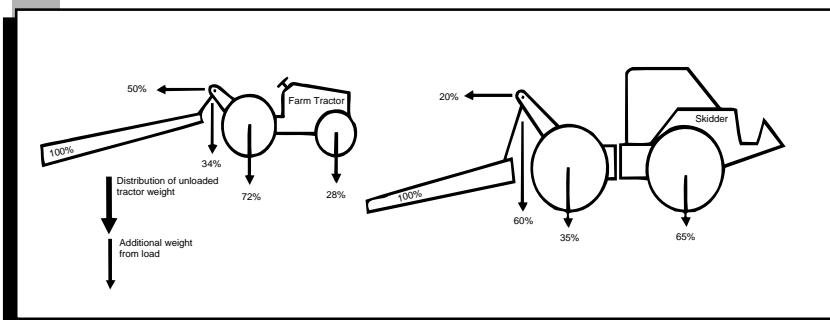
Directional felling is the safest method of getting trees on the ground. The proper notch directs the tree's fall and hinge wood keeps the tree under control as it falls. This

method is more productive, saves time and saves wood.

1. Notch in the direction of the fall.
2. Make no shallow notches. The notch must create a hinge of holding wood with sufficient width and strength to guide the tree safely to the ground.
3. The top and bottom cuts must meet in every style of notching. If not, as the tree begins to fall, the small overlap closes early, before the tree hits the ground. The hinge wood snaps, and the tree falls out of control.
4. Make back cuts level, and leave a hinge.
5. Maintain the hinge wood. The hinge wood is a logger's margin of safety. It controls the tree in its fall to the ground. Leave from one to two inches of hinge wood.

◆ Using a Small Tractor for Harvesting Trees

Small four-wheel-drive tractors set up for use in the woods can be beneficial to woodlot owners. They are smaller and cost less than conventional logging machinery. They maneuver well, can be transported easily, provide good traction. If used correctly, they will do less damage to the forest.





If a farm tractor is going to be used to harvest trees, some modifications need to be made. A canopy or rollbar, radiator shields, more weight to counter heavy loads and a belly pan to guard the undercarriage and lower engine parts need to be added. A spark arrestor for the muffler, a fire extinguisher, tire chains and a shield for the valve stems on the tires are other equipment and changes to consider.

Because farm tractors carry a major portion of the load weight over the rear wheels, weight will have to be added to the front. This will increase traction. In any case, small tractors are easily tipped over. Be cautious and work safely.

If you are using a small tractor, here are steps to get the wood from the forest to the road.

1. The tree is cut, limbed and bucked to length.
2. Wood is bunched into piles of suitable size. Pile or bunch size depends on your equipment, the type of ground and terrain and the size of the final product.

3. The bunches are winched to the road or trail side and piled. Piling is done easily with a sled.
4. Eventually, piles will make up a load. Piles on the side of the road are usually taken to the road with large equipment.



Working in the woods can be satisfying and rewarding for woodland owners. Just remember to always work safely in the woods and that planning and common-sense are key. Before undertaking any activity in the woods, it is also advisable to first discuss it with your professional forester.



This Maine Farm Safety Fact Sheet is part of an educational fact sheet series produced by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. For more information on farm safety, contact your county Extension office.



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